

## II

### THE WIDOWED FLAMEN

#### § i. *The Pollution of Death*

A DIFFERENT explanation of the rule which obliged the Flamen Theory Dialis to resign the priesthood on the death of his wife<sup>1</sup> has been that the<sup>^</sup> suggested by my friend Dr. L. R. Farnell. He supposes that such oTthe<sup>1011</sup> a bereavement would render the Flamen ceremonially impure, and widowed therefore unfit to hold office.<sup>2</sup> It is true that the ceremonial pollu- Flamen tion caused by death commonly disqualifies a man for the discharge cause<sup>d</sup> of sacred functions, but as a rule the disqualification is only tern- by the porary and can be removed by seclusion and the observance of P<sup>o</sup>U<sup>utl</sup>on purificatory rites, the length of the seclusion and the nature of the ° purification varying with the degree of relationship in which the living stand to the dead. Thus, for example, if one of the sacred eunuchs at Hierapolis-Barnbyce saw the dead body of a stranger, he was unclean for that day and might not enter the sanctuary of the goddess ; but next day after purifying himself he was free to enter. But if the corpse happened to be that of a relation he was unclean for thirty days and had to shave his head before he might set foot within the holy precinct.<sup>3</sup> Again, in the Greek island of Ceos persons who had offered the annual sacrifices to their departed friends were unclean for two days afterwards and might not enter a sanctuary; they had to purify themselves with water.<sup>4</sup> Similarly no one might go into the shrine of Men Tyrannus for ten days after being in contact with the dead.<sup>5</sup> Once more, at Stratonicea in Caria a chorus of thirty noble boys, clad in white and holding branches in their hands, used to sing a hymn daily in honour of Zeus and Hecate; but if one of them were sick or had suffered a domestic bereavement, he was for the time being excused, not permanently excluded, from the

<sup>1</sup> See above, vol. i. p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* vol. ii.

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\* *The Hbbert Journal*, April 1907,

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<sup>5</sup> G. Dittenberger, *op. tit.* vol. ii.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 53. pp. 429 sq. No. 633.